

Rules of the Game

All About Mounts (Part Five)

By Skip Williams



Last week we examined **move** and **full-round actions** while mounted. This week, we'll finish our discussion of mounts with a few useful odds and ends.

Mount Height

Because your mount gives you a height advantage in combat, it's sometimes worthwhile to consider just how high up you are when sitting astride your mount. The table below gives typical heights for **creatures** of various **sizes**:

Size	Space	Natural Reach
Fine	1/2 ft. across x 1/2 ft high	0 ft.
Diminutive	1 ft. across x 1 ft high	0 ft.
Tiny	2 1/2 ft. across x 2 1/2 ft. high	0 ft.
Small	5 ft. across x 5 ft. high	5 ft.
Medium	5 ft. across x 5 ft. high	5 ft.
Large (Long)	10 ft. across x 5 ft. high	5 ft.
Large (Tall)	10 ft. across x 5 ft. high	10 ft.
Huge (Long)	15 ft. across x 10 ft. high	10 ft.
Huge (Tall)	15 ft. across x 15 ft. high	15 ft.
Gargantuan (Long)	20 ft. across x 15 ft. high	15 ft.
Gargantuan (Tall)	20 ft. across x 20 ft. high	20 ft.
Colossal (Long)	30 ft. across x 25 ft. high	15 ft.
Colossal (Tall)	30 ft. across x 30 ft. high	25 ft.

As noted in Part One, a mounted character measures reach for **melee attacks** from any part of the space the rider shares with the mount. If you want to limit how far down a mounted character can reach, just assume the rider sits atop the mount, then compare the rider's reach with a foe's height (or the height of anything else the rider wants to reach).

You also can use this table to determine **falling** damage when a rider falls off a mount.

Feats in Mounted Combat

Several feats from the *Player's Handbook* give you extra advantages in combat. Here's an overview:

Mounted Archery: This feat simply reduces the attack **penalties** you suffer when making **ranged attacks** from a moving mount. Your penalty is -2 instead of -4 if your mount is taking a double move, and -4 instead of -8 if your mount is running. Remember that if your mount makes only a single move (or does not move at all), you make your ranged attack either before or after your mount moves and your mount is assumed to be stationary when you shoot (or throw).

Mounted Combat: This feat allows you to negate hits against your mount. You can use this feat once each round when your mount is **hit** by a melee or ranged attack. You usually use the feat during another creature's **turn**, but you can use it during your own turn to protect your mount from an **attack of opportunity**. You can wait until you know if an attack hits before deciding to use the feat, but you should do so before the **damage roll** from a successful attack. (Your DM should give you a moment to make your decision before any damage rolls.) When you use the feat, your Ride **check** result effectively becomes your mount's **Armor Class** if it is higher than your mount's current Armor Class. If the foe has rolled a **natural 20** for the attack, it hits your mount automatically no matter what your Ride check (or your mount's Armor Class) is.

Ride-By Attack: This feat works something like the Spring Attack feat. You can charge a foe, attack, and then keep moving. The total distance you move cannot exceed twice your mount's **speed**. You and your mount's movements don't provoke attacks of opportunity from the foe you attack. Since you must charge in a straight line and you cannot move through another creature's space when charging, exactly how you use this feat is problematical. According to the **D&D** FAQ, you charge directly toward your target as normal. After your attack, you can change direction so you can move away in a straight line.

Spirited Charge: This feat allows you to deal double **damage** with a **melee weapon** when you and your mount charge, or triple damage with a lance. You can use this feat along with a ride-by attack. This feat doesn't increase the damage your mount deals if it also attacks during the charge.

Trample: This feat keeps your opponent from simply stepping aside to avoid you and your mount when you make a mounted overrun (see the notes on mounted overruns in Part Three). In addition, if your foe is knocked down in the overrun, your mount can make a free hoof attack. According to the **D&D** FAQ, a mount that lacks hooves can instead make an attack with any **natural weapon** it has on its front feet.

Intelligent Mounts

According to the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, a mount with an **Intelligence** score of 3 or higher acts like an **NPC** ally rather than a mount. Riding such an **ally** works much like riding an aggressive mount in battle (see Part Two), except that you don't have to make a Ride **check** to act while riding. (If your mount carries you willingly, the ride is smooth enough so your **actions** aren't restricted.) You also cannot make a Ride check to control the mount's actions, but you can make a Diplomacy (or possibly a Wild Empathy) check to get the mount to accept your direction. If you do, your mount acts just like a mount trained for combat riding.

Even if you cannot (or do not choose to) direct your mount's actions, you still can ride along, making your own **initiative** roll and possibly delaying until after your mount acts, as noted in Part Two.

Riding as a Passenger

You're riding on a mount or a vehicle as a passenger if you're aboard but someone else is controlling the mount or vehicle. This also works just like riding an intelligent mount, except that you don't have the option of taking control of the mount. (If you did, you wouldn't be a mere passenger.)

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of ***Dragon** Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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